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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

WEDNESDAY, June 12, 1940.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "WASHING MACHINES." Information from Bureau of Home Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Bulletin available, 1497-F, Home Laundering.

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In warm weather an electric washing machine is a blessing. Personal laundry increases for all the family. You may have winter blankets to clean and store, and other extra laundry work because of changing to summer curtains.

So if you're one of those who are planning to invest in a labor-saving electric washing machine, you may like to know the points to check over when shopping. Equipment people in the Bureau of Home Economics can't recommend any particular brand or even a type, but they do suggest a number of features common to all good machines. These are discussed in Farmers' Bulletin 1497-F, Methods and Equipment for Home Laundering, a free bulletin you can get by writing to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

You may take your choice among the three types of washing units- the agitator, the vacuum cup, or the cylinder. Each operates on a different principle, but the effect is the same: soapy water is forced through and through fabrics until they are clean. Ask to have a demonstration of the type that appeals to you, with a tub full of clothes. Then you can judge whether the action is gentle or severe.

A machine that works gently may take longer to finish the job, but will treat the fabrics better. Don't worry about using extra current to run the machine a little longer. Where electricity costs 4 cents a kilowatt hour, you can use your washing machine 2 hours every week without adding more than a dime a month to your electric bill. So a few minutes more or less makes no difference in your bill.

If you wash your blankets at home you will find a spinner dryer a great help. The blankets come out beautifully light and fluffy. Washers with spinner dryers cost a little more than those with wringers, but they are worth the difference to many women because of the comfort and safety of operation.

A spinner dryer takes out enough moisture so that clothes are ready to hang out. Spinner dryers don't tear fabrics nor pop buttons off, nor put heavy wrinkles into clothes. And the hands are safe. The dryer, or "extractor" as it's sometimes called, usually has a cover that can't be removed until the spinner has stopped revolving.

There's a very new type of washing machine on the market which has almost magic controls. They govern the time the clothes are in the machine, the temperature of the water, the drainage of the soapy water, its replacement with rinse water, and the extraction of the moisture. The housewife sets the controls, puts the clothes in and adds soap. When she takes the cover off, the clothes are ready to hang up.

These nearly human machines are not yet sold everywhere, and at present they cost more than other machines. So if the budget won't stretch to include anything so completely labor-saving, or even to buy a machine with a spinner dryer, the next best thing is to get a machine with a good wringer.

The first point to make sure of in a wringer is safety. Does the wringer have a safety release in case the fingers get caught? And next, does the drainboard reverse automatically when the rollers are reversed? Try the wringer in various positions to make sure it sets firmly and balances properly. Some prefer hard rubber rollers and some like soft ones. Hard rolls last longer, but they may injure bottoms or hooks if you put the clothes carelessly through the wringer. Soft rolls adjust more easily to various thicknesses of material, but they wear out faster.

New types of machines have either automatic control of the pressure on the wringer rolls, or just one screw. Some machines have an automatic safety release on

the wringer. That works so that whenever the pressure between the rolls is too great, the control springs open. And some machines have a safety feed device that keeps the fingers from touching the rolls.

Getting rid of the used wash water was formerly one of the hardest parts of the wash-day work. If you didn't have a floor drain you had to draw the water off from the bottom of the tub into a bucket, and then lift the heavy bucket up to the set-tub or sink to empty it. You remember how the bucket slopped over at times, or you forgot to close the drain, with much mopping up as a result. The newer machines no longer have the drain cock at the bottom of the tub. They have an automatic pump with a permanently attached hose. You can hook the hose over the rim of the sink or the laundry tub for draining. Many of the more expensive machines have these pumps as standard equipment, but you can usually get them on any model for 5 or 10 dollars extra.

See whether the machine you are considering buying has a switch to control the motor. And whether all controls are up toward the top of the machine, easy to reach. Look for sturdy construction details, and see that all parts are easy to clean. And, finally, be sure to get a machine of the right size for your family. A 7 or 8 pound capacity is about right for the average sized family.

Those are the principal points to consider in choosing an electric washing machine, spinner-dryers versus wringers, safety controls within easy reach, and a permanently attached hose for draining.

Tomorrow we'll have some cookery questions, covering such things as custards and dried beans.

